

Marc Lalande, Ph.D.

IN SUPPORT OF

SB 857- AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE FOR GENETIC COUNSELORS

February 20, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee, I am here to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 857- An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors.

My name is Marc Lalande, Ph.D. and I am Professor and Chair of the Department of Genetics and Genome Sciences at UCONN Health and Director of the University of Connecticut Stem Cell Institute and its Institute for Systems Genomics.

My Department is home of 5 genetic counselors who function in a wide variety of clinical specialties, including prenatal genetics, teratology and inherited cancer. I work very closely with them as as educators of first year medical students in the course Human Biology. They are highly skilled professionals who have to master incorporation of the newest technologies as soon as they emerge from the laboratory and then utilize this information to interpret findings for their patients.

There are many different types of training programs in genetics, but the training program for genetic counselors is unique in its rigorous clinical and science training which affords those who graduate, sit for a Board examination and continue their education post graduation to continue to be the highly knowledgeable professionals that they are.

Genetic testing continues to become more integral in medicine and I expect that there will be an increasing demand for the services of genetic counselors in the state.

Therefore, it is time to set the standards that will ensure that the public is protected and receives the most accurate and up to date information when they see a genetic counseling professional. Advances in testing technologies will continue to drive this demand, as we have more impact on common conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and mental health conditions.

I appreciate the Public Health Committee raising this bill, which I urge you to support so that we can become the 20th state in the country with licensure for this highly skilled health profession.

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